



Plans for Preferred Future Become Parts of Proud Legacy

The SAES launched its strategic plan, entitled *Planning Our Preferred Future*, at the beginning of the 2005–06 academic year. That plan, laid out in a 17-page booklet, set the SAES on a course of action that has seen our enrollment and retention increase, spurred increases in our external funding and focused our work in academic, research and Extension. The 2009–10 academic year was the final year for this blueprint, and work has begun on a replacement plan. This new SAES plan will mesh with the University's new strategic plan, the UNC Tomorrow initiative and the nationwide goals from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Dr. Donald McDowell, the SAES's interim dean, says that "Planning our Preferred Future provided us a starting point and has helped us stay focused the past five years. Our next strategic plan will continue in this vein and move the SAES to the next level. It will allow us to show the Power of the A."

Since the strategic plan was launched, we've used this issue of the *on the move* newsletter as an annual report card that stacked the preceding academic year's accomplishments and highlights up against the 11 major strategic plan themes. For each of the 11 themes, the strategic plan offers two-to-four goals or measurable objectives, and these too have been key criteria in evaluating how well the previous academic year had lived up to the strategic plan.

One of the 2009–10 academic year highlights that fits nicely into the strategic plan's theme of "Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources" is the Greening of Sockwell Hall project that a group of SAES biological engineering students put together,

for first \$10,000, and then another \$75,000 in awards from national competitions from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Another group of SAES students was part of a ground-breaking student exchange program with Ege University in Turkey that was a leading milestone on the road to satisfying goals in the strategic plan's international theme. Students from A&T's College of Engineering assisted Cooperative Extension's 4-H staff with a series of robotics camps that helped the SAES make the grade in its strategic plan's Innovative Technologies theme. A quintet of SAES students majoring in landscape architecture, contributed a development plan for shaping a 437-acre site in Randolph County into a senior center that drew media attention and covered several bases in the strategic plan theme of "Empowering Individuals, Families and Communities."

Odds are strong that some forthcoming SAES students will be among the thousands of youths — across the country and around the world — who will be participating in the 2010 4-H National Science Day experiment this fall. An A&T submission, coordinated by Cooperative Extension's program leader

for 4-H and youth development, Dr. Claudette Smith, took first place in a competition open to scientists at all land-grant universities. This honor not only increased our bottom line, coming with a \$20,000 prize, but will strengthen our efforts in science, engineering and technology.

Two Cooperative Extension nutrition education outreaches in partnership with

Walmart were high points in the "Minority and Environmental Health" theme, and a \$1.3 million USAID grant for a project that will take American know-how in conserva-



Shannon Wiley, a 4-H Youth Development Agent in Guilford County, is part of the team that's added a robotics component to 4-H offerings.

tion agriculture to Southeast Asia harmonized sweetly with the "Biotechnology and Biodiversity" theme.

The two *Planning for Our Preferred Future* themes that have been guiding SAES in "Maintaining a Responsive Learning Environment" and to "Attract, Retain and Graduate Outstanding Students" were well fortified during the 2009–10 academic year. A 14 percent increase in student enrollment in fall of '09 is the score that trumps all others in the learning environment assessment on any report card, and when an SAES student — biological and civil engineering major Wayne Kimball Jr. — takes office as Student Government Association president in the fall of '10, the caliber of student the SAES is attracting will be evident to the University community, the entire University of North Carolina system and beyond.



Dr. Claudette Smith

At the start of the 2005-06 academic year, the SAES implemented a five-year strategic plan, "Planning our Preferred Future," which is organized around 11 primary themes. Here is a theme-by-theme look at some highlights from the 2009-10 academic year.

THEME 1: MAINTAIN A RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Enrollment at the start of the 2009-10 academic year was 931 students, an increase of 14 percent from the 818 SAES students at the start of fall semester in 2008. The largest



Dr. Keith Baldwin, Extension program leader and horticulture specialist, gives an overview of research into high tunnel greenhouse production at the A&T State University Farm during A&T Extension's Small Farms Week in late March.

spike was in graduate programs, which went from 117 in 2008 to 157 in 2009 (a 34 percent increase). Undergraduate enrollment more than held its own, increasing 11 percent (701 to 774) from fall 2008 to 2009. Enrollment also got a boost from improved retention rates, and the financial aid the SAES provided students — 35 undergraduates and 58 graduate students in 2009-10 receiving \$1,214,414 in wages — through the Agricultural Research Program.

THEME 2: ATTRACT, RETAIN AND GRADUATE OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

It's a revealing insight into the caliber of students the SAES is attracting that two of three newest additions to the top-tier leadership of A&T's Student Government Association for the 2010-11 academic year will be SAES students. Wayne Kimball Jr., a senior majoring in biological and civil engineering, takes the helm of the SGA executive board as SGA president, and Carla Saunders, a senior majoring in agricultural education and communications, was elected Miss A&T and also gets a seat on the executive board.

Two investments in attracting outstanding students made in 2009-10 will undoubtedly

produce returns in the near future. All 600-level graduate courses have been retooled so that undergraduate students can receive 500-level credit when they enroll. And the SAES put a foundation in place for its Undergraduate Research Program, with four students selected to inaugurate the program.

THEME 3: IMPROVING MINORITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Cooperative Extension Program used a grant from the Walmart Foundation to launch two new nutrition education initiatives. The first effort brought a select "Force of 100" teenagers to Greensboro for three days of intensive training that provided them with enough information

to return home as ambassadors for healthy living. Another new Extension nutrition education outreach sent a team of specialists out to establish an all new "Love for Life" health campaign among mothers and daughters with limited financial resources.

THEME 4: ENSURING A NUTRITIOUS, SAFE AND SECURE FOOD SUPPLY

Two additional research scientists joined the faculty at the SAES's Center for Excellence in Post-Harvest Technologies (CEPHT) on the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis in the 2009-10 academic year. The CEPHT faculty is now at work on eight research projects representing approximately \$2.5 million in funding. The CEPHT faculty also has 10 pending research proposals for funding that could add as much as \$2.2 million to the budget.

CEPHT contributions to the specific *Theme 4* goals of more educational opportunities in nutrition include a graduate student fellowship program, and support for three interdisciplinary post-doctoral research associates.

THEME 5: EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

A mid-March issue of the *Asheboro Courier-Tribune* ran a report on "promising new developments" for a funding proposal for a new Randolph County senior center that had been infused by SAES community service. The story lauded a development plan — required by the funding agency — that five SAES landscape architecture students had put together with guidance from a member of the SAES faculty.

The *Courier-Tribune* quoted the Senior Adults Association's director as saying that "the SAES students came up with five alternative design strategies for the entire 437-acre site." The newspaper concluded that "The end result is a package of ideas that could grow into an impressive development on Asheboro's southside."

THEME 6: ADVANCING BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

In the spring of 2010, a \$1.3 million dollar grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development was announced for a project that will assist Southeast Asian farmers in adopting the basics of conservation agriculture, which employs sustainable production practices to maintain biodiversity without decreasing yields. Dr. Manuel Reyes of the SAES will be directing an international team in assisting farmers in Cambodia and the Philippines, and another team member is Dr. Osei Yeboah, interim director of the SAES's International Trade Center.



Joe Thompson, the winner of the 2010 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year Award, built his success story around innovations in aquaculture.

THEME 7: ENSURING THE VIABILITY OF SMALL SCALE AGRICULTURE

The SAES's Edible and Medicinal Mushroom Project celebrated its eighth anniversary in 2010, and the project's track record includes 600 farmers and landowners who have been trained to grow and market shiitake, maitake and other varieties of mushrooms. A comprehensive new curriculum for training Extension agents and farmers in outdoor shiitake production has been developed by Cooperative Extension and published under project auspices.

THEME 8: PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SAES biological engineering students hosted a gathering of student chapters of the American Society of Agricultural & Biological Engineers (ASABE) from nine universities that they capped off with a tree-planting ceremony commemorating their "Greening of Sockwell Hall" project that was funded with a \$10,000 award from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Sustainable Design Competition. The winning plan was for a rain garden around Sockwell with a low-maintenance landscape that conserves water. The team of students was then one of 14 winning teams from universities across the nation to get a second award from EPA — good for an additional \$75,000 — and the delegation traveled to Washington for an award presentation as part of the EPA's Earth Day celebration.

THEME 9: PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The first goal of this theme is preparing faculty and students for life in a global society, and the SAES recorded several firsts that were spot-on this goal in 2009–10. A member of the Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education faculty chaperoned five SAES students on a trip to Turkey that capped off their 2009–10 academic year with an international study experience. The same USDA Capacity Building Grant that made study abroad a reality for the five SAES students also provided funding for four Turkish students to come to Greensboro for a month of study at A&T.

Another first for the SAES's international activities resume was Dr. Paula Faulkner's six-week visit to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait as a member of a group

studying the cultural, historical and economic contexts in the three Gulf Coast societies with support from the Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program.

THEME 10: USING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

A program coordinator at the helm of Cooperative Extension's 4-H and Youth Development work, Dr. Claudette Smith, put together a collaboration with faculty from the Department of Biology and the College of Engineering that won a national competition among land-grant institutions from across the U.S. to lead the 2010 4-H National Science Day experiment. In October of 2010, thousands of young scientists from around the globe as well as across the U.S. will be using materials secured through the National 4-H Council website to conduct the 4-H₂O experiment developed at A&T. The reward for the good idea is a \$20,000 prize that will be used to further programs and activities oriented to 4-H Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) initiatives.



In March 2010, the staff for the SAES's Child Development Laboratory cut the ribbon at a new campus location, near Webb Hall, where the facilities are more in line with the 5-star rating the Child Development Lab has received from the N.C. Division of Child Development.

Another of Cooperative Extension's 4-H and Youth Development collaborative efforts led to the launch of a robotics program for youth living in low-income communities in 2009. Students from A&T's College of Engineering assisted the Guilford County 4-H staff. The A&T robotics team also conducted a series of robotics camps across the state this past summer.

The SAES is now offering 81 online

courses — up from 59 in 2008–09 — and all four SAES departments now have online course offerings. Three online degree programs are in place: bachelor's and master's programs in agricultural education, and a master's program in agricultural economics. The strong repertoire of courses now available online was a key element in the steady increase in student credit hours generated by the SAES in the past five years. The SAES recorded 14,407 student credit hours in 2009–10; up from 13,721 in 2005–06.

THEME 11: EXPAND RESOURCE BASE AND MAXIMIZE RELATIONSHIPS

During the 2009–10 academic year, the SAES Agricultural Research Program moved into first place among the University's schools and colleges in funded research, with more than \$16.36 million in awards. The SAES was able to grab the lead in the funding race thanks to the hard work of a faculty that submitted 88 proposals during the 2009–10 academic year — a total almost double the previous year's submission tally of 47. There was an above

average success rate of 35 percent, as 31 of these proposals were awarded funding.

The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T also had a banner year in grant funding. More than \$1 million in grants was announced, including a landmark \$658,000 grant from the national children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) program that will establish a network of community gardens in North Carolina.

on the *move*

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Research Apprenticeship Program 2010



NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AUG. 16

First Day of Fall Semester Classes

OCT. 6

4-H National Youth Science Day Experiment

OCT. 9

Homecoming 2010 (vs. Morgan State)

OCT. 18 & 19

Fall Break

The 2010 Research Apprenticeship Program brought 20 high-caliber high school students to the A&T campus for four weeks of on-campus introductions to scientific research. The RAP experience includes one-on-one project guidance between each student and a member of the Agricultural Research Program faculty.

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